



## O\*NET OnLine

### Summary Report for: 21-1014.00 - Mental Health Counselors

Updated 2010

Bright Outlook

Counsel with emphasis on prevention. Work with individuals and groups to promote optimum mental health. May help individuals deal with addictions and substance abuse; family, parenting, and marital problems; suicide; stress management; problems with self-esteem; and issues associated with aging and mental and emotional health.

**Sample of reported job titles:** Therapist, Counselor, Correctional Counselor, Mental Health Therapist, Case Manager, Mental Health Specialist, Behavior Support Specialist (BSS), Mental Health Counselor, Mental Health Program Specialist, Child Care Counselor

View report:

**Summary**

Details

Custom

[Tasks](#) | [Tools & Technology](#) | [Knowledge](#) | [Skills](#) | [Abilities](#) | [Work Activities](#) | [Work Context](#) | [Job Zone](#) | [Education](#) | [Interests](#) | [Work Styles](#) | [Work Values](#) | [Related Occupations](#) | [Wages & Employment](#) | [Additional Information](#)

### Tasks

- Maintain confidentiality of records relating to clients' treatment.
- Assess patients for risk of suicide attempts.
- Encourage clients to express their feelings and discuss what is happening in their lives, and help them to develop insight into themselves and their relationships.
- Collect information about clients through interviews, observation, and tests.
- Counsel clients and patients, individually and in group sessions, to assist in overcoming dependencies, adjusting to life, and making changes.
- Guide clients in the development of skills and strategies for dealing with their problems.
- Develop and implement treatment plans based on clinical experience and knowledge.
- Fill out and maintain client-related paperwork, including federal- and state-mandated forms, client diagnostic records, and progress notes.
- Prepare and maintain all required treatment records and reports.
- Evaluate clients' physical or mental condition based on review of client information.

[back to top](#)

### Tools & Technology

Tools used in this occupation:

**Blood pressure cuff kits** — Sphygmomanometers

**Desktop computers**

**Electronic medical thermometers** — Digital medical thermometers

**Notebook computers****Personal computers****Technology used in this occupation:**

**Data base user interface and query software** — Database software; Microsoft Access

**Electronic mail software** — Email software; Microsoft Outlook

**Internet browser software** — Microsoft Internet Explorer \*; Netscape Navigator; Web browser software

**Spreadsheet software** — Microsoft Excel

**Word processing software** — Microsoft Word

\* Software developed by a government agency and/or distributed as freeware or shareware.

[back to top](#)

**Knowledge**

**Psychology** — Knowledge of human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral and affective disorders.

**Therapy and Counseling** — Knowledge of principles, methods, and procedures for diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of physical and mental dysfunctions, and for career counseling and guidance.

**Customer and Personal Service** — Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.

**Sociology and Anthropology** — Knowledge of group behavior and dynamics, societal trends and influences, human migrations, ethnicity, cultures and their history and origins.

**English Language** — Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.

**Education and Training** — Knowledge of principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.

**Philosophy and Theology** — Knowledge of different philosophical systems and religions. This includes their basic principles, values, ethics, ways of thinking, customs, practices, and their impact on human culture.

**Clerical** — Knowledge of administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, stenography and transcription, designing forms, and other office procedures and terminology.

[back to top](#)

**Skills**

**Active Listening** — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.

**Social Perceptiveness** — Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.

**Service Orientation** — Actively looking for ways to help people.

**Speaking** — Talking to others to convey information effectively.

**Monitoring** — Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.

**Critical Thinking** — Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.

**Judgment and Decision Making** — Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.

**Persuasion** — Persuading others to change their minds or behavior.

**Reading Comprehension** — Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.

**Complex Problem Solving** — Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.

[back to top](#)

## Abilities

**Oral Expression** — The ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.

**Oral Comprehension** — The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.

**Problem Sensitivity** — The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.

**Speech Clarity** — The ability to speak clearly so others can understand you.

**Speech Recognition** — The ability to identify and understand the speech of another person.

**Inductive Reasoning** — The ability to combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions (includes finding a relationship among seemingly unrelated events).

**Written Comprehension** — The ability to read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.

**Written Expression** — The ability to communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.

**Deductive Reasoning** — The ability to apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.

**Fluency of Ideas** — The ability to come up with a number of ideas about a topic (the number of ideas is important, not their quality, correctness, or creativity).

[back to top](#)

## Work Activities

**Assisting and Caring for Others** — Providing personal assistance, medical attention, emotional support, or other personal care to others such as coworkers, customers, or patients.

**Getting Information** — Observing, receiving, and otherwise obtaining information from all relevant sources.

**Establishing and Maintaining Interpersonal Relationships** — Developing constructive and cooperative working relationships with others, and maintaining them over time.

**Documenting/Recording Information** — Entering, transcribing, recording, storing, or maintaining information in written or electronic/magnetic form.

**Communicating with Supervisors, Peers, or Subordinates** — Providing information to supervisors, co-workers, and subordinates by telephone, in written form, e-mail, or in person.

**Making Decisions and Solving Problems** — Analyzing information and evaluating results to choose the best solution and solve problems.

**Judging the Qualities of Things, Services, or People** — Assessing the value, importance, or quality of things or people.

**Identifying Objects, Actions, and Events** — Identifying information by categorizing, estimating, recognizing differences or similarities, and detecting changes in circumstances or events.

**Interpreting the Meaning of Information for Others** — Translating or explaining what information means and how it can be used.

**Resolving Conflicts and Negotiating with Others** — Handling complaints, settling disputes, and resolving grievances and conflicts, or otherwise negotiating with others.

[back to top](#)

## Work Context

**Face-to-Face Discussions** — How often do you have to have face-to-face discussions with individuals or teams in this job?

**Telephone** — How often do you have telephone conversations in this job?

**Indoors, Environmentally Controlled** — How often does this job require working indoors in environmentally controlled conditions?

**Frequency of Decision Making** — How frequently is the worker required to make decisions that affect other people, the financial resources, and/or the image and reputation of the organization?

**Contact With Others** — How much does this job require the worker to be in contact with others (face-to-face, by telephone, or otherwise) in order to perform it?

**Freedom to Make Decisions** — How much decision making freedom, without supervision, does the job offer?

**Work With Work Group or Team** — How important is it to work with others in a group or team in this job?

**Deal With External Customers** — How important is it to work with external customers or the public in this job?

**Coordinate or Lead Others** — How important is it to coordinate or lead others in accomplishing work activities in this job?

**Impact of Decisions on Co-workers or Company Results** — How do the decisions an employee makes impact the results of co-workers, clients or the company?

[back to top](#)

## Job Zone

**Title** Job Zone Five: Extensive Preparation Needed

**Education** Most of these occupations require graduate school. For example, they may require a master's degree, and some require a Ph.D., M.D., or J.D. (law degree).

**Related Experience** Extensive skill, knowledge, and experience are needed for these occupations. Many require more than five years of experience. For example, surgeons must complete four years of college and an additional five to seven years of specialized medical training to be able to do their job.


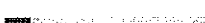

**Job Training** Employees may need some on-the-job training, but most of these occupations assume that the person will already have the required skills, knowledge, work-related experience, and/or training.

**Job Zone Examples** These occupations often involve coordinating, training, supervising, or managing the activities of others to accomplish goals. Very advanced communication and organizational skills are required. Examples include librarians, lawyers, aerospace engineers, wildlife biologists, school psychologists, surgeons, treasurers, and controllers.

**SVP Range** (8.0 and above)

[back to top](#)

## Education

Percentage of Respondents	Education Level Required
76 	Master's degree
13 	Some college, no degree
6 	Bachelor's degree

[back to top](#)

## Interests

Interest code: **SIA**

**Social** — Social occupations frequently involve working with, communicating with, and teaching people. These occupations often involve helping or providing service to others.

**Investigative** — Investigative occupations frequently involve working with ideas, and require an extensive amount of thinking. These occupations can involve searching for facts and figuring out problems mentally.

**Artistic** — Artistic occupations frequently involve working with forms, designs and patterns. They often require self-expression and the work can be done without following a clear set of rules.

[back to top](#)

## Work Styles

**Self Control** — Job requires maintaining composure, keeping emotions in check, controlling anger, and avoiding aggressive behavior, even in very difficult situations.

**Concern for Others** — Job requires being sensitive to others' needs and feelings and being understanding and helpful on the job.

**Dependability** — Job requires being reliable, responsible, and dependable, and fulfilling obligations.

**Stress Tolerance** — Job requires accepting criticism and dealing calmly and effectively with high stress situations.

**Social Orientation** — Job requires preferring to work with others rather than alone, and being personally connected with others on the job.

**Adaptability/Flexibility** — Job requires being open to change (positive or negative) and to considerable variety in the workplace.

**Integrity** — Job requires being honest and ethical.

**Cooperation** — Job requires being pleasant with others on the job and displaying a good-natured, cooperative attitude.

**Attention to Detail** — Job requires being careful about detail and thorough in completing work tasks.

**Achievement/Effort** — Job requires establishing and maintaining personally challenging achievement goals and exerting effort toward mastering tasks.

[back to top](#)

## Work Values

**Relationships** — Occupations that satisfy this work value allow employees to provide service to others and work with co-workers in a friendly non-competitive environment. Corresponding needs are Co-workers, Moral Values and Social Service.

**Achievement** — Occupations that satisfy this work value are results oriented and allow employees to use their strongest abilities, giving them a feeling of accomplishment. Corresponding needs are Ability Utilization and Achievement.

**Independence** — Occupations that satisfy this work value allow employees to work on their own and make decisions. Corresponding needs are Creativity, Responsibility and Autonomy.

[back to top](#)

## Related Occupations

- 21-1021.00 [Child, Family, and School Social](#)
- 21-1093.00 [Social and Human Service Assistants](#)
- 29-1122.00 [Occupational Therapists](#)
- 29-1123.00 [Physical Therapists](#)
- 29-1125.00 [Recreational Therapists](#)
- 39-9041.00 [Residential Advisors](#)

[back to top](#)

## Wages & Employment Trends

### National

**Median wages (2009)** \$18.28 hourly, \$38,010 annual

**Employment (2008)** 113,000 employees

**Projected growth (2008-2018)** ■■■■ Much faster than average (20% or higher)

**Projected job openings (2008-2018)** 50,100

**Top industries (2008)** [Health Care and Social Assistance](#)  
[Government](#)

### State & National

[Select a State](#)[Go](#)

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics [2009 wage data](#) and [2008-2018 employment projections](#). "Projected growth" represents the estimated change in total employment over the projections period (2008-2018). "Projected job openings" represent openings due to growth and replacement.

[back to top](#)

## Sources of Additional Information

**Disclaimer:** Sources are listed to provide additional information on related jobs, specialties, and/or industries. Links to non-DOL Internet sites are provided for your convenience and do not constitute an endorsement.

- [Counselors](#). Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-11 Edition*.

[back to top](#)

---

Send comments or questions to [O\\*NET Info \(onet@onetcenter.org\)](mailto:onet@onetcenter.org).